

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

May 20, 1997

BRIEFING FOR EDUCATION TOWN HALL

DATE:	May 21, 1997
LOCATION:	Oval Office
EVENT TIME:	4:00 pm - 4:45 pm
FROM:	Sylvia Mathews Bruce Reed

I. PURPOSE

To brief you on the substance and format for the upcoming Education Town Hall in Clarksburg, West Virginia on Thursday.

II. BACKGROUND

You will be holding a town hall meeting at the Robert C. Byrd High School attended by 160 students, parents, teachers, principals, school administrators, and other individuals interested in education from throughout the state. This an opportunity for you to highlight the importance of national standards and, for the first time, explain in detail what standards are and why they are important. In your opening remarks, you will walk through a sample reading question. You will also be announcing that West Virginia and Massachusetts have agreed to participate in your national standards and testing initiative, and that the National Alliance of Business has just endorsed your proposal. Following your remarks, you will call on members of the audience to ask you questions and pose questions to audience members in return. Bob Kittle, the County Superintendent of Schools will serve as the moderator.

III. PARTICIPANTS

Sylvia Mathews
Rahm Emanuel
Bruce Reed
Michael Cohen
Ann Lewis
Terry Edmonds

~~Mike McCurry~~ Barry Toiv
Eli Attie
Linda Moore

IV. PRESS PLAN

Closed Press.

V. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

Participants in the briefing will review the following items:

- 1) The overall event format and message.
- 2) Substance of your opening remarks, including the sample reading question.
- 3) Questions you may be asked on education.
- 4) Questions you may be asked Other issues Q&A.

VI. REMARKS

None.

VII. ATTACHMENTS

- Outline of Event.
- Background on Education in West Virginia.
- Draft Remarks.
- Sample Reading Question (to be incorporated in your remarks).
- Suggested Questions from President to Audience.

News - WVA, MA + VAB

News - example of book given. but be
standard

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for 1/1

OUTLINE OF EVENTS
EDUCATION TOWN HALL
MAY 22, 1997

1:00-1:05 MODERATOR BOB KITTLE, Superintendent of Harrison County Schools, will welcome audience and introduce Mary Helen Shields, senior at the Robert C. Byrd High School.

HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR MARY HELEN SHIELDS, will introduce the President.

1:05-1:15 **THE PRESIDENT MAKES OPENING REMARKS: EXPLANATION OF STANDARDS/POLICY ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

THE PRESIDENT will make remarks about education as the highest priority, the need to focus on standards, and announce new state and business endorsements.

THE PRESIDENT will walk-through charts explaining 4th grade reading standards which will be displayed for the audience on an overhead projector. THE PRESIDENT will invite 4th grade student Hannah Galey to read a passage from Charlotte's Web.

1:15-1:35 **THE PRESIDENT** takes/asks questions.

1:35-1:40 MODERATOR HIGHLIGHTS TEACHER
Moderator calls on Donna Rose, Reading Specialist at the Lost Creek Elementary School, who speaks about meeting standards, what schools and teachers will need.

1:45-2:00 **THE PRESIDENT** takes/asks questions.

2:00-2:05 MODERATOR HIGHLIGHTS STUDENT
Moderator calls on Jeremy Thompson, National Merit Finalist from the Bridgeport High School, who talks about how high standards/good education has helped him.

2:05-2:15 **THE PRESIDENT** takes/asks questions.

(Total time: 1:15)

BACKGROUND ON EDUCATION IN WEST VIRGINIA

SCHOOL REFORM EFFORTS

West Virginia's reform efforts have been piecemeal rather than comprehensive, but nevertheless have received high marks from outside observers. As both one of the nation's poorest states and one of its most rural, West Virginia faces some unusual challenges in education. Efforts to overcome these challenges in the past fifteen years have included a substantial investment in information technology for the classroom; raising teacher salaries to near the national average (when adjusted for cost of living); a statewide effort to replace and renovate decaying schools; and, most recently, a restructuring of the high school curriculum to focus on job skills and vocational training as well as academics. If the 1996 National Assessment of Educational Progress in Mathematics results are any guide, West Virginia's schools are improving. The state tied for third in improvement over 1992 in both 8th grade and 4th grade scores.

Standards and Testing

West Virginia has not made a substantial investment in development of its own standards. This year, students will be taking the nationally normed Stanford Achievement Test. State Superintendent Henry Marockie suggests that with adequate norm-referenced tests available, state education funds can be better spent in other areas. He says West Virginia has spent less than \$100,000 on its standards program, whereas its neighbor, Kentucky, has spent nearly \$29 million.

Rather than establishing academic standards and then developing tests aligned to the standards, West Virginia started with the test first. Once selected the Stanford Achievement Test, the state developed specific instructional objectives for each subject area, based on the content of the test.

School Finance

In April 1997, a West Virginia judge held that the state has not complied with a 1982 decision ordering higher quality and greater statewide equity in schools. The original decision, which included unusually detailed specifications for curriculum, personnel, materials, equipment and facilities in 16 academic areas as well as in guidance, health services and transportation, served as a catalyst for many of the reforms that have been enacted in the past 15 years. However, although the state attempted to equalize funding among districts by guaranteeing a minimum per-pupil allocation to every district, substantial inequities remain because districts may impose excess levies on their residents to generate higher per-pupil spending.

Technology

Both Gov. Caperton and now Gov. Underwood have made technology a major priority in education. As a result, West Virginia is a national leader in the use of technology in classrooms. In 1989, the legislature launched the computer-assisted basic skills program, a ten-year effort to place computers in every elementary school classroom. Since then, the state has purchased

still in play

19,500 computers for local districts and expects to meet its ten-year goal. The state's 11-to-1 student-computer ratio in elementary schools is one of the lowest in the nation, and in 1996 the legislature appropriated \$8.8 million to increase technology in middle and high schools. To date, 14,000 educators have been trained to use computers for basic skills instruction.

Forty percent of West Virginia's schools are now connected to the Internet, and state officials plan to reach 85% in 1997. Bell Atlantic has been a major partner in this effort, called WORLD SCHOOL. The state has 320 distance learning downlink sites across the state. Students may take a number of courses through the system, including advanced placement and foreign language classes.

In February 1997, West Virginia received a Technology Innovation Challenge Grant from the U.S. Department of Education, which will help 152 schools in eight county school districts (including Harrison County, in which Clarksburg is located), the West Virginia High Technology Consortium Foundation, and several other partners increase the use of computers in the classroom. Part of the grant will also support Technology Opportunity Centers, at which students, parents and displaced workers can receive computer training and use computers for job searches.

Teachers

West Virginia teacher salaries in 1990 were the among the lowest in the country, but are now 17th in the nation when adjusted for cost of living. The state's student-teacher ratio, at about 15-to-1, is one of the lowest anywhere. Last year the West Virginia Education Fund, a statewide fund established by business leaders in 1983 to foster innovation and excellence in the public schools, helped overhaul West Virginia University's teacher education program. Students now will study for five years and will earn a bachelor's degree in a subject area and a master's degree in education. Students also will receive three years of internship experience through "professional development schools" run by colleges and universities.

School Construction

A 1989 law created the statewide School Building Authority (SBA) to fund the construction and renovation of schools. The SBA has funded the construction of 61 new schools and renovations or additions to 780 schools.

Full-day Kindergarten

In 1993, the state legislature required all districts to offer full-day kindergarten classes to all eligible students by 1996. A 1996 law allowed the state superintendent to grant extensions to systems with significant school building projects or sizable enrollment growth.

Jobs Through Education Act

A 1996 law requires teachers and counselors to work with eighth grade students to establish five-year job skills plans. High schools must offer students choices of career clusters, each incorporating both academic and vocational skills. The state's Certificate of Proficiency will be replaced by a CD-ROM electronic portfolio containing students' academic records, awards, test scores and exemplary work. Some groups oppose the reform due to its emphasis on early career preparation, and a bill has been introduced in the legislature to repeal the law.

1997 Legislative Session

There were no new initiatives proposed or enacted in the last legislative session. The Governor's major education priority was continued support for technology implementation.

One controversial issue that arose during the legislative session pertained to funding for 4yr olds in kindergarten. The state's school finance formula provides additional funds for 4yr olds who participate in kindergarten programs. During the legislative session it became apparent that a number of local superintendents were using this financial incentive to aggressively recruit 4yr olds in order to boost state funding. Several legislators threatened to cut off this program because they viewed the local behavior as an abuse of the funding mechanism. As a compromise, the legislature delayed the termination of this component of the formula until school year 98-99, since student placement and teacher hiring decisions had already been made for the coming school year.

There was also an unsuccessful move in the legislature to end the state's participation in the federal School-to-Work program, which has come under attack by far right groups. Supporters of School-to-Work were able to turn this effort back.

WEST VIRGINIA SCHOOLS STATISTICAL OVERVIEW

SIZE

Enrollment: 310,511 (95% White, 4% Black, less than 1% all other groups)

School Districts: 55

Public Schools: 848

STATE DEMOGRAPHICS

Population: 1.8 million

Children in Poverty: 29%

Single Parent Families: 24%

SCHOOL SPENDING

State Spending: \$1.783 billion

Per Pupil: \$5,713 (1993-94 school year)

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

MATH:

West Virginia's 4th and 8th graders have improved their performance in mathematics during the 1990's.

1996 4th Grade NAEP Math

Proficient or Advanced -- 19% (Nation: 20%)

At or above basic -- 63% (62%)

Below basic -- 37% (38%)

Average public school 4th grade math scores increased significantly from 1992 to 1996; in 1996 students performed near the national average. The percentage at or above proficient increased from 12% to 19%.

1996 8th Grade NAEP Math

Proficient or Advanced -- 14% (Nation: 23%)

At or above basic -- 54% (Nation: 61%)

Below Basic -- 46% (Nation: 39%)

Average public school 8th grade math scores increased significantly from 1990 to 1996, and from 1992 to 1996, although average student performance remained below the national average. In addition, the percentage of students at or above proficient increased from 1990 to 1992, and from 1992 to 1996.

READING:

On reading, West Virginia performed about the same in 1992 and 1994. Students performed near the national average.

1994 4th Grade NAEP Reading

Proficient or advanced -- 26% (Nation: 28%)

At or above basic -- 58% (Nation: 59%)

Below Basic -- 42% (Nation 41%)

SCIENCE:

1996 8th Grade NAEP Science

Students performed near national average (Test is not yet nationally normed)

DROPOUTS AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

16-19-Year-Old Dropout Rate: 10.6% (National: 11.2%)

College Attendance Rate: 49.5% (National: 57.5%) (Estimates)

Draft 5/20/97 7:30 pm.

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM J. CLINTON
OPENING REMARKS
EDUCATION TOWN HALL MEETING
CLARKSBURG, WEST VIRGINIA
MAY 22, 1997**

We are here today to talk about what we must do together to set high standards that will ensure that all our children have the knowledge and skills to meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century. Standards are the key to making sure every 8-year-old can read, every 12-year old can log on to the Internet, and every 18-year-old can go to college.

I came to Clarksburg because of the great strides you are making in the national movement for standards. And because I know that this challenge can not be met in Washington alone. We can articulate a vision, but it is up to parents, teachers and community leaders like you to really make it work. I want to thank our host, Gov. Underwood, for his leadership in raising standards and achievement in this state. In 1996, West Virginia tied for third in improvement since 1992 in 4th grade and 8th grade math.

Education is my top priority. It has always been the heart of opportunity in America. It is the embodiment of everything we must do to prepare for the jobs and careers of the 21st century. If we all have the tools to succeed, we can build a strong, united community and move forward as one America.

The balanced budget agreement we reached with Congress funds the largest investment in education in a generation; the largest increase in higher education since the G.I. Bill in 1945, more than 50 years ago: expands Head Start, funds America Reads, \$35 billion in tax relief for higher education, including HOPE Scholarship and \$10,000 tax deduction and will help us wire every classroom by the year 2000.

I want to thank former Gov. Caperton for his pioneering efforts to make West Virginia a national leader in the use of technology in schools. This state is now well on its way to putting a computer in every elementary school by 1999. Innovative use of "distance learning." This town meeting is being broadcast live on the Internet here in West Virginia and across the country.

But nothing we do matters as much as what our children learn each day. Our success depends upon holding our students to the highest standards -- making sure they learn the basics that will be the foundation of success in the next century.

We must have high standards of excellence that all states -- from West Virginia to Nevada -- can agree on. That is why in my State of the Union address, I called for national standards of excellence in the basics -- not federal government standards, but national standards for 4th grade reading and 8th grade math, representing what all our students must know to succeed in the 21st century.

I have proposed national tests, based on widely used National Assessment of Educational Progress test. Today, I am pleased to announce that Gov. Underwood, along with the state board of ed. and state superintendent has agreed that W. VA. Should participate in this test. In addition, Massachusetts and the National Alliance of Business are endorsing our call for national tests. West Virginia, Massachusetts and the NAB are now on board with MD, NC, MI and the Department of Defense Schools in this growing national consensus for standards.

This is great news, but we must do even more. We all talk about standards, but today I want to walk through with you just what we mean when we talk about standards. [GO TO CHARTS]

CHART ONE: describes fourth grade reading standards -- what it means to meet basic, proficient and advanced standards.

CHART TWO: ask a student [Hannah Galey, a 4th grader from Nutter Fort Intermediate] to read passage from *Charlotte's Web*.

CHART THREE: Based on the above passage, how would you describe Charlotte to a friend? Three descriptions match three standard levels.

CHART FOUR: Shows how America's fourth graders are doing.

Reading is the key to everything we are trying to do to prepare our children for the next century -- from opening up a new world of knowledge on the Internet to opening the doors of college to getting them ready for the high-tech jobs of the future. We know we have a lot to do to lift the reading levels of our students up, but we know from the progress you have made here in West Virginia, that our students can do better. We know our children can meet high standards if they are challenged to do so.

That is why this meeting is so important. Standards are a way of making sure our children can learn and compete with students anywhere in the country and anywhere in the world. Now I want to hear from you...

**NATIONAL EDUCATION STANDARDS:
FOURTH-GRADE READING**

BASIC:

- CAN RECOGNIZE MOST WORDS, IDENTIFY MOST IMPORTANT INFORMATION

PROFICIENT:

- CAN SUMMARIZE PASSAGE, FIND SPECIFIC INFORMATION, DESCRIBE THE WAY AUTHOR PRESENTS INFORMATION

ADVANCED:

- CAN PROVIDE A MORE DETAILED AND THOUGHTFUL EXPLANATION

How MAEP
① Label & Define MAEP achievement levels
Tells how well a child is doing

~~In the slide, you are illustrating 3 MAEP~~
~~ach. levels~~

~~Basic, Prof. & Adv.~~

~~A student performing at basic level can~~
~~do~~

SAMPLE PASSAGE FROM E.B. WHITE'S *CHARLOTTE'S WEB*:

HAVING PROMISED WILBUR THAT SHE WOULD SAVE HIS LIFE, SHE WAS DETERMINED TO KEEP HER PROMISE. CHARLOTTE WAS NATURALLY PATIENT. SHE KNEW FROM EXPERIENCE THAT IF SHE WAITED LONG ENOUGH, A FLY WOULD COME TO HER WEB; AND SHE FELT SURE THAT IF SHE THOUGHT LONG ENOUGH ABOUT WILBUR'S PROBLEM, AN IDEA WOULD COME TO HER MIND. FINALLY, ONE MORNING TOWARD THE MIDDLE OF JULY, THE IDEA CAME. "WHY HOW PERFECTLY SIMPLE!" SHE SAID TO HERSELF. "THE WAY TO SAVE WILBUR'S LIFE IS TO PLAY A TRICK ON ZUCKERMAN. IF I CAN FOOL A BUG," THOUGHT CHARLOTTE, "I CAN SURELY FOOL A MAN. PEOPLE ARE NOT AS SMART AS BUGS."

illustrative passage d. white
to similar to what could
be a lot
c/h. grad. next 1

UNDERSTANDING CHARLOTTE'S WEB:

Q: BASED ON THE ABOVE PASSAGE, HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE CHARLOTTE TO A FRIEND?

BASIC

- CHARLOTTE KEEPS HER PROMISE

PROFICIENT

- CHARLOTTE WORKS HARD TO KEEP HER PROMISE

ADVANCED

- CHARLOTTE PLANS TO KEEP HER PROMISE TO SAVE WILBUR'S LIFE BY TRICKING ZUCKERMAN

Sample question - Sketch write the answer
with illustrative response
corresponding to each
level of achievement

Not - more complicated
& thought

As you move from level to

level - responses get more complex

~~expand~~ & show a
deeper understanding,
more complex ideas

**MEETING NATIONAL STANDARDS IN FOURTH GRADE READING:
HOW AMERICA IS DOING**

BELOW BASIC:

40%

BASIC:

30%

PROFICIENT:

23%

ADVANCED:

7%

Am Rls II

QUESTIONS FROM PRESIDENT TO AUDIENCE:

Student Expectations and Parent/Teacher Support

West Virginia recently adopted new instructional goals in core subject areas (its own effort at standards); education is improving steadily. In 1996, the state tied for 3rd in improvement over 1992 in both 8th grade and 4th grade math -- very impressive, since it is 49th in per capita income.

Q: A recent survey of high school students by Public Agenda showed that more than 70% felt students would pay more attention to school and learn more if standards were raised and enforced. Do you think we are challenging our students enough, or expecting too little?

Q: [To students:] Do your teachers and parents push you to work as hard as you can? Is schoolwork more interesting when the teachers demand more, or just harder? Could most of your classmates learn more if they worked harder?

Q: [To teachers:] How can parents help teachers achieve higher standards for students? What can teachers do to help parents be more supportive?

Q: What are some of the ways that parents are involved in schools here -- and do you think that role needs to increase?

Q: [To parents:] How do you find the time to know what your child is doing in school, and to help them? How do you let them know that they must work hard and do well? What could the schools do to help you do a better job? Will it be useful for you to have the kinds of individual test results for your child that our standards plan will provide?

Teaching

West Virginia has one of the lowest student-teacher ratios anywhere (15 to 1). Teacher salaries, among the lowest in the nation in 1990, have been raised to 17th in the nation -- the biggest 3-year salary increase in the country.

Q: What do you do in this community to attract the best teachers and reward excellence in teaching?

Q: What do you do about the few teachers who aren't effective in the classroom?

Q: [To teachers:] Were you adequately prepared by your teacher training programs for the challenges you face in the classroom? Do you get the kind of support you need to stay current, grow professionally, and become more effective?

Q: [To students:] Tell me about your best teachers. What makes them so good?

Accountability

Q: How can we reward schools that are doing a good job?

Q: What do you do here in Clarksburg, and throughout West Virginia, if there is a school that is not meeting standards? How do you give a school the help it needs to improve?

Technology

West Virginia is a national leader in the use of technology in schools -- well on its way to your goal of a computer in every elementary classroom by 1999. By the end of this year, 85% of all schools will be connected to the Internet. So far, 14,000 teachers have been trained to use computers to teach basic skills.

Q: How do computers in the classroom help prepare students? What do they enable teachers and students to do?

Q: How are classrooms making use of the Internet? What kinds of resources and Web sites are useful for students and teachers?

Q: Can new technology play a role in teaching the basic subjects, such as reading and math?

Q: Does it make a difference to have that background in technology for life after school?

Q: What kind of special training do teachers need to use technology in the classroom? Who provides it, and how can more teachers get involved?

Community Support

Examples: Last year, a new statewide fund (the West Virginia Education Fund) established by business leaders overhauled the state's teacher education program to make it more rigorous. A partnership between Bell-Atlantic and the state's Department of Education is giving all public schools access to the Internet. West Virginia is one of the top 10 states in offering service learning opportunities to students.

Q: What is the larger community doing to improve education here?

Q: What do higher standards and better education in the basics mean to West Virginia's businesses? What can the business community do to help raise standards?

Q: I've been asking America's colleges to encourage their students to work as reading tutors, to help 8-year-olds learn to read. Are there other ways in which colleges and universities can play a role in K-12 education in West Virginia?

WEST VIRGINIA STANDARDS TOWN HALL MEETING
Thursday, May 22, 1997

Education Q & A's for the President

National Standards/National Tests

Question: **Standards:** Why is the development of national standards so important *now*?

Answer: Student achievement is not improving fast enough. Today's economy demands higher and higher levels of skill and education to succeed in all types of jobs and far too many children are not meeting the standards that will prepare them for tomorrow. High standards pull young people up and encourage them to work harder and create high expectations for themselves. They also provide a benchmark for parents and teachers for what children should know and whether they are learning it. Places that have set high standards have made progress in student achievement. I want that improvement for *all* our children.

Question: **Standards/National vs. Federal.** You say these are "national, not federal" standards and tests. What exactly does that mean, especially since the U.S. Department of Education is going to develop them?

Answer: It means that while the federal government will fund the development of the tests, it is not in charge of what the tests measure, when they are administered, or how they are used in schools and communities around the country.

The tests will be based on the existing National Assessment of Education Progress, which is already used in more than 40 states. The content for these tests -- the reading and math skills they measure -- has already been determined by outside groups of teachers, curriculum specialists and others, and by agreement of state education officials. These content frameworks for reading and math are widely accepted and are based on widespread input, and strong state involvement. They truly are national standards, built from the bottom up. And they are challenging for our youngsters. The new tests I have proposed will measure the same math and reading skills that NAEP already measures.

The federal government will pay for the development of these tests, just as it helps pay for other research and development in education and other policy areas, and just as it has paid for the National Assessment of Education Progress for almost 30 years. Providing good information and good tools to improve our schools has long been part of the federal government's role in education, and should remain so.

Question: **Standards/Other National Standards.** What about other national standards that have been developed in subjects like science and history? Do you support those? Why do you focus so much on reading and math?

Answer: There have been excellent voluntary national standards produced in several subjects, such as math, geography, and civics, that many states and districts are finding useful as they develop their own state and local standards. Other proposed standards, such as the controversial history standards, have not been as successful. At the national level we are focusing on reading and math because they are the first basics, and there is a grassroots, national consensus that every student needs to master these two core subjects.

Question: **Standards:** How are you going to ensure that all children can meet these high standards?

Answer: First, these tests, together with state and local tests, will help teachers and parents know which children need help and what help they need.

Second, these tests are about lifting our students up, not putting them down. We must make sure that our students have safe and orderly classrooms, well prepared teachers, access to good textbooks, computers and other technology that will connect them to the information superhighway.

I'm doing my part to help by making sure that the federal government makes a substantial investment in education. And Secretary Riley and the Education Department will continue to provide information on the best practices in each area. But the primary responsibility lies here with those of you in this room --

parents, teachers and principals, school board members, others in the community and state and local officials. You have the responsibility to come together and provide our students with the preparation they need, for these standards and for the future.

Question: **National Tests/High Stakes.** Do you believe students should be required to pass these tests in order to be promoted to the next grade level?

No state that participates will be required to use the math and reading tests for this purpose. However, I believe that if we set standards for students, they should be required to meet the standards in order to be promoted from elementary to middle school, from middle school to high school, and before graduating from high school. When I was Governor, we required students to pass an 8th grade test before moving into high school. While some students had difficulty passing the test the first time, almost everyone did ultimately. We gave extra help to students who needed it, including summer school. And over time, the percentage of students who passed the test on the first time increased, as students, teachers and parents came to understand how well the did mattered.

I believe every state should require students to meet standards before they move on. Every state gives their own tests, in addition to these national tests. Each state will need to decide what the best combination of tests would be.

Question: **National Test/Students with Disabilities.** What are you doing to support participation of students with disabilities in the 4th and 8th grade assessments you are developing?

Answer: We must expect more of all our children, including those with disabilities. The Department of Education, which is working with education experts to help develop the tests, will make the 4th grade reading and 8th grade math tests available to states and schools in formats accessible to students with disabilities. In addition, schools will be able to get technical assistance and other support to help ensure that students with disabilities are appropriately included.

Question: **National Test/Grade Levels.** Why 4th grade reading and 8th grade math?

Answer: Reading and math are two of the most basic skills. Children can't move ahead in school in any subject if they can't read English by the 4th grade. And 8th grade math is a pivotal point in terms of making sure that a student has mastered the mathematics she needs to move forward in high school and go to college or into the work place.

Children go to school for the first three years of grade school to learn how to read, so they can spend the rest of their years reading to learn. There is a strong link between low reading skills, falling behind in school, disruptive behavior, and dropping out. Yet, about 40% of our children are not learning how to read well and independently by the end of third grade, decreasing their chances of succeeding in school and in life. We need to change this.

8th grade math is also a critical turning point for students. At that point, students need to have mastered the basics of math -- including the foundations of algebra and geometry -- so they are prepared to go on and take the harder math and science courses they need for college preparation or jobs right out of high school. In our high technology, international economy, our students will need to know more mathematics than most of us adults learned. And, having good math skills is increasingly a prerequisite for getting a good job, students who don't take algebra and geometry are much less likely to go to college than students who do.

Unfortunately, right now, the United States is below the international average in math at 8th grade. We can do better. Many more young people should be taking algebra by the end of the 8th grade so they can take more advanced course in high school. That is what most 13 year olds are doing around the world. Only 25% of our 8th graders have learned algebra -- as opposed to almost 100% of students in other industrialized nations. Having a national benchmark in math at 8th grade will show whether our students are where they should be.

Question: **National Test/Too Late?** Isn't 4th grade too late for a reading test?

Answer: No. Children are expected to have made the transition from learning to read to reading to learn by the 4th grade. This is the critical turning point -- and the point we should measure to see that all our students are making it.

Of course, a short national test in reading does not replace what teachers and parents have always done -- paying attention to children's progress in learning to read all through the critical early childhood years.

Question: **National Test/Why Needed?** How will these tests differ from existing tests? What will they tell us that we don't already know?

Answer: These tests will provide information to parents and teachers about individual student scores and how close a child is to reaching high national standards. Currently, there is no way of knowing whether your child's progress or your child's school is measuring up to national and international standards. Now, each state sets its own standards, and some are more difficult than others, so it is difficult for parents to tell how well their child is actually doing compared with tough, meaningful national and international benchmarks--the kind they will be judged against in the real world. These tests will give parents and teachers, wherever they live, an opportunity to know how their children are doing.

Question: **National Test/Content.** Who decides what is on the tests?

Answer: The tests will be based on the widely accepted frameworks of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). These frameworks are developed by nationally recognized teachers and other educators and community leaders, with input from thousands of interested parents, teachers and others interested in education.

At present 43 states -- including West Virginia -- participate in the NAEP and have agreed that the NAEP frameworks in reading and math are good standards for what students should know in these critical subjects.

Question: **National Test/Privacy.** Will the federal government have my child's test score? Will it be private?

Answer: The federal government will not be collecting individual student scores. It will be up to states and communities to do that, if they choose to and they will have to keep individual student scores confidential.

Question: **National Test/Cost.** How much will it cost to give the tests?

Answer: The total cost of developing the new tests will be between \$10 - 12 million per year in 1997 and 1998. The cost of administering the new tests is estimated to be \$10 - \$12 per student, and I've proposed that the Department of Education reimburse these costs for the first year. This investment is more than worth it to make sure we are doing all we can to help students master the basics.

Question: **National Test/LEP Students.** Will children with limited English proficiency be included in these tests?

Answer: Yes. We want to make sure that students with limited English will be able to take the test whenever possible. This means that we will provide the math test in Spanish. It also means that when the test is administered, schools would provide accommodations that students need such as access to an English dictionary.

Question: **National Test/English and Spanish.** Why is the math test being given in English and Spanish but the reading test is only being given in English?

Answer: Developing the ability to read in English is a basic skill that every child must have to succeed in American schools and society. However, there are many recent immigrants at the 8th grade level who may not speak English well but who can do advanced math and should be asked to show what math they know. We are providing a bilingual math test in Spanish and English because Spanish is the most common language other than English among students.

Question: **National Test/Calculators.** Will you allow kids to use calculators on the new tests? Shouldn't kids know their multiplication tables on their own and not rely on calculators?

Answer: Kids should learn the basics. They should know how to add, subtract, multiply and divide without using a calculator. However, after a child has mastered the basics of arithmetic, calculators can be useful for solving complicated math problems. As part of the test development process, an advisory committee of outstanding math teachers and other experts will be considering this issue.

Question: **National Test/Teachers.** How will you ensure that teachers are prepared to help students meet these high standards?

Answer: Making sure that our teachers are prepared to teach to these high standards is a shared responsibility, primarily among school systems, colleges and universities, states, and the teachers themselves.

We must do a better job of preparing teachers before they get to the classroom, and helping them in their first several years. And we have to help teachers keep learning while they are on the job.

We also need standards of excellence for teachers and we've got to reward excellence. That's why I support the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, which has developed tough teacher standards. Today they are only about 500 nationally board certified teachers in the country, and none in West Virginia. I think we need at least one master teacher in every school. I hope West Virginia will take steps to do this and I have put money in my budget to help.

Question: **National Test/Home Schooling.** How will these tests affect students who participate in home schooling?

Answer: In a legal sense, it will not affect those students at all. No student in a home school will be required to take these tests, though they will be able to if they want to. Every parent will have access to the tests on the Internet each year, so if they want to see for themselves how well their students are measuring up against these

standards, they can find out.

Budget-Related Questions

Question: **School Construction.** Why doesn't the budget plan include help for school construction?

Answer: This is a critical need, and I have proposed a plan for jump-starting State and local school construction and renovation efforts. Unfortunately, there was considerable resistance in the budget negotiations to including it in the agreement. I am disappointed that it could not be included.

- We should remember that if we failed to reach agreement on a balanced budget plan, that would have made local school construction efforts more difficult, by raising interest rates.
- On balance, the agreement was a tremendous success on education overall.
- Within the context of the agreement, I will continue to look for opportunities to address this problem.

Question: **HOPE/Tuition Increases.** Won't Your HOPE Scholarship plan cause college tuitions to go up even more than they already have been?

Answer: Actually, Federal aid does not seem to have much of an effect on tuition costs. When Federal college aid was rising in the 1970s, real college tuitions remained fairly steady. But when real Federal aid dropped slightly during the 1980s, that is when tuitions rose most sharply. One study suggests that is partly because colleges are trying to provide aid to the lowest-income students, and to do that they increase tuition for everyone else. By restoring the Federal government's commitment to financial aid -- for both low-income and middle-income families -- we are helping to reduce one of the pressures that increases tuition and fees.

Question: **HOPE/IRS.** Will the IRS be looking at my grades to see if I'm eligible for the HOPE Scholarship?

[NOTE: On Sunday, Frank Raines told CNN that "we think that having the IRS trying to enforce grades may be going a little too far, and we're going to try to find a way to simplify the program."]

Answer: The IRS would not be looking at student transcripts. But I do want to make sure that we are not only helping people pay for college, but also that they have an incentive to work hard once they are there. A new study from Georgia State University suggests that the grade requirement in Georgia's HOPE Scholarship plan has helped some of the borderline students, those who started out very close to the B average, to perform better in college.

I have gotten some feedback about the grade requirement in my HOPE Scholarship plan, and Secretary Riley and Secretary Rubin will be working closely with Congress to make sure that we encourage students to work hard, but that we do it in a simple way, without imposing any undue burdens on taxpayers or colleges.

Question: **Student Loans.** Does the budget agreement cut student loans?

Answer: No, it will not affect student loan borrowers in any way. There are some savings to taxpayers that we can achieve by making government more efficient and reducing subsidies to middlemen -- something that I proposed in my Budget in January -- and the negotiators agreed to some of those changes to help bring the deficit down by \$1.7 billion. But the agreement makes it clear that there can be no cuts in benefits or availability of loans. (And colleges may continue to choose to participate in the Direct Loan program or the guarantee system).

Question: **Education Investments.** With the tax cuts, will there be any money left for education programs?

Answer: The budget agreement includes **the largest increase in our investment in education in 30 years, and the largest single boost in college aid since the G.I. Bill.** It includes:

- **Roughly \$35 billion in tax cuts for higher education,** consistent with the HOPE Scholarship and \$10,000 tax deduction.

- **Pell Grant Expansion.** The largest increase in two decades -- a funding boost of 25%. The maximum award will reach \$3,000, an increase of \$300. In the 1998 budget alone, an additional 348,000 students will receive grants: 130,000 young people from moderate-income families, and 218,000 low income students over the age of 24.
- **Technology Literacy.** Double funding to help ensure that computers are in every classroom, every classroom is connected to the Internet, all teachers are trained, and that high quality software and on-line resources are available to help schools integrate technology into the curriculum so that students can become technologically literate.
- **Head Start.** Continued expansion toward my goal of 1 million kids in 2002.
- **America Reads.** A child literacy initiative consistent with the America Reads Challenge, to mobilize volunteers to help every child learn to read well and independently by the end of third grade.
- **Job Corps and other Job Training.** A 12% increase for job training programs, including continued expansion of Job Corps.

Question: **Reading.** What is the reading program that was including in the budget deal?

Answer: The agreement includes my plan to help make sure that every child learns to read well and independently by the end of third grade. Secretary Riley and Harris Wofford, the CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service, will be working with Congress on some of the details. What I have proposed includes:

- **America's Reading Corps:** 25,000 reading specialists and 11,000 AmeriCorps members serving as recruiters and coordinators, to enlist an army of one million volunteer tutors.
- **Parents as First Teachers:** Grants to foster effective programs that help parents help their children to become

successful readers (e.g. HIPPY).

- **Head Start expansion.**

General Topics and Issues

Question: **College Costs.** Why has college tuition been going up?

Answer: Between the 1990-91 academic year and the 1995-96 academic year, overall price inflation was only 17 percent, but the average tuition and fees at public colleges increased by 31 percent and at private colleges increased by 33 percent. Some of the increase is the result of research and staffing costs that increased faster than inflation. At the public colleges, funding from State legislatures did not grow as fast as costs did. And at private colleges, while tuition went up, so did financial aid that the college was providing (in other words, not everyone was actually paying the full tuition and fees).

Question: **Goals 2000 Controversies.** Aren't these tests just another version of your Goals 2000 program, in which the federal government promotes outcomes-based education, politically-correct history, and a federal takeover of our schools?

Answer: These tests are not a part of Goals 2000, but let me say that I'm very proud of Goals 2000. Goals 2000 provides federal support for state and local efforts to raise academic standards in the basic skills and core academic subjects, and for local, bottom up efforts to improve teaching and learning. There are no federal standards or curriculum, and no requirement for outcomes-based education or any other particular approach.

With regard to a "federal takeover" of local schools, that simply isn't accurate. Goals 2000 supports local control, not federal control. You don't have to take my word for this. Harrison County and some 40 other school systems in West Virginia have received Goals 2000 funds. You should ask teachers, principals, school board members or parents in those communities if Secretary Riley and the U.S. Department of Education have come in and set their curriculum or otherwise tried to tell them what to do.

The national tests we are discussing today are focused on basic

reading and math skills that all students should master. They are not part of Goals 2000 in any way, and you don't have to give the tests in order to keep receiving Goals 2000 funds. However, I believe every states should participate in Goals 2000 and in these tests. They are both ways of helping our students reach for the highest possible standards.

Question: **School-to-Work Controversies** The School-to-Work program has been somewhat controversial in West Virginia. Is it true that School-to-Work tracks kids into inferior programs of study with low academic standards and requires them to make job decisions in elementary and middle schools?

Answer: No. The School-to-Work Program is designed to give students the academic and on-the-job training to prepare them for high skill jobs and further education. School-to-Work does not in any way track students into certain career paths, nor limit their options. It gives students and parents information and opportunities to explore a wide range of career options, and it helps make sure that students learn basic and advanced academic skills that will prepare them either for work or for college.

Question: **IDEA and Discipline.** I am concerned about keeping our schools safe and disciplined. I understand that the new special education law (IDEA) just passed by Congress still makes it difficult to discipline disruptive students who are disabled. How can the other students learn if teachers can't maintain order?

Answer: First, let me point out that the federal special education law, first passed in the 1970's, has been essential for providing education opportunities for children with disabilities. Before that law was passed, many children with disabilities were denied an education. Since the law was passed, educational opportunities for children with disabilities have increased dramatically, because the law guarantees an education to these children. This is a good thing, because the education of every child is important, because education is the way for all of our people to become productive and independent citizens. I am proud to be able to sign, next month, the bill continuing this law in effect.

Second, I agree that it is very important for all children that

classrooms be orderly places where children can learn and teachers can teach. While maintaining the responsibility to provide children with disabilities with a free and appropriate education, this new bill strengthens the ability of teachers and principals to deal with disruptive or dangerous students, including those with disabilities. It does this by:

- making it easier for principals to remove from the classroom children with disabilities who bring a gun, weapon or drugs to school, or who pose a danger to themselves, their teachers or their classmates, while continuing to provide them with an education in another setting.
- making it easier to address a child's behavior problems early on -- before they get out of hand -- by requiring that these be considered in the development of an Individual Education Plan, and by making the regular classroom teacher a part of the team that develops the plan.

Finding the right balance between the protection of individual students and the needs of a larger group is often difficult. I am pleased that the Congress, with an overwhelming bipartisan majority, has found a way to strike that balance.

Question: **Safe Schools:** There are stories all the time about people walking into schools and shooting kids, fights, drugs, etc. What is the government doing to stop it?

Answer: I have challenged all schools to put in place high standards of discipline and behavior along with tough measures to keep guns and drugs out of schools. Last year I protected the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities program that supports school security, and drug and violence prevention programs in 97 percent of our country's school districts. I also support school uniforms as one way to deter school violence, and have encouraged communities to enforce truancy laws.

Question: **Teacher Salaries:** I'd like to become a teacher and I think I'd be a good one. But I can't afford it. Is there anything the government can do to make teacher salaries greater?

Answer: You set the salary for teachers here in West Virginia, just as states

and local school districts do across America. In this state you have made substantial progress on teachers' salaries during the 1990s. Through income-contingent student loans, I have worked to make it easier for college graduates to enter teaching or pursue other service-related professions where starting salaries are relatively low.

Question: **Vouchers.** I think voucher programs provide an opportunity to some parents they otherwise would not have -- to send their child to a private or parochial school. What is your position on school vouchers?

Answer: I believe there are better ways to provide greater school choice to students and their families. One very good way is to have every state pass a charter school law that allows parents and teachers to start new public charter schools that stay open only as long they do a good job. In fact, I have proposed nearly doubling the charter school start-up program (to \$100 million next year) to help start 3,000 charter schools over the next several years.

While I support public school choice, I oppose federally funded tuition vouchers for private elementary and secondary schools. I also oppose state funded and locally funded vouchers. Vouchers take money away from public schools, and controversy over vouchers distracts communities from the hard work of improving our schools.

Family and Community Involvement

Question: **Parental Responsibility:** What can you do to make sure parents understand what they need to do to make sure their children are ready to start school, and how they can help their children as they go through?

Answer: Over thirty years of research shows that family involvement in children's learning is critical to their child's success. There are lots of things parents can do to help their children start school ready to learn. I strongly urge parents to read to their children starting in their earliest years. Schools can provide a welcoming atmosphere

for parents, while local employers can help by giving paid leave for employees to be involved in their children's schools, or provide other means for employees to attend parent-teacher conferences or volunteer as tutors or mentors. Some of the best employers do it.

Question: **Parental Responsibility.** What about parents who can't read and write, or have other limitations? How can they help their children get ready for and successfully proceed through school?

Answer: Every parent can help, from the first days of a child's life--by talking and singing to them, paying attention to them, and helping them learn their colors and shapes. All parents can help their kids in other ways by showing up at school events, asking kids if they need help and getting it for them, being active in school activities, and giving them a place to do homework and making sure they do it. Through programs like Adult Education and Even Start family literacy we support local initiatives that assist parents to gain the skills they need to help their children and build a better life for themselves and their families.

Question: **Business Community Partnerships:** More and more, we are finding the need for employees with higher levels of training than we are seeing coming into the workplace. How can employers like me help ensure that more highly qualified candidates will enter the workforce?

Answer: The business community knows as well as any how important high standards are in educating our youth. All over the country, businesses have successfully forged partnerships with their local school communities to provide resources like apprenticeship and mentoring programs, after school programs, etc. Last month, over 200 high-tech industry leaders who hire graduates from across the country endorsed my standards and testing initiative because they know first hand how important it is to have highly skilled graduates entering their workforces. You can help by partnering with your local school community.

Question: **School to Work.** How do I open my business up to the school to work program?

Answer: Business supports school-to-work partnerships because they represent an investment in people which yields access to highly trained, versatile workers who are certified and knowledgeable in all aspects of an industry. I would urge any employer interested in getting more involved to talk with their local school system and community colleges about how to participate.

Question: **Local School Systems.** What can local school systems do to help implement the goals set by the education summits and your national initiatives?

Answer: There are lots of things that local schools can do:

- Use the national tests and set high standards.
- Help prepare teachers to become national board-certified and reward them when they do.
- Develop and enforce fair standards of conduct for all students.
- Get the whole community involved in helping young children learn to read. Pediatricians should prescribe reading to parents of infants and preschoolers. College students and others should volunteer to tutor.
- Keep working, as you are in West Virginia, to make sure every 12 year old can log onto the Internet.
- Start early in letting students and families know that they will need at least 2 years of postsecondary education.

Question: **After-School Programs:** Both of my parents work. Will there be any money to have after-school programs at schools like mine?

Answer: My budget includes a new initiative to provide safe havens and to extend learning opportunities for children and their families at schools across the country. The initiative will help after-school, summer and weekend programs get started as Community Learning Centers and foster community involvement.

America Reads

Question: **Reading.** How can we become a nation of readers?

Answer: My America Reads Challenge is pursuing several essential strategies to help our children learn to read: creating more learning opportunities to supplement classroom reading instruction; encouraging parent involvement to help children develop readiness skills for reading beginning at birth, as well as involvement throughout the school years; and bringing best teaching practices into classrooms.

Question: **Reading/Tutoring.** Does Tutoring make a difference? Aren't teachers most important?

Answer: Even the best teachers will tell you that some children need extra help outside the classroom hours in order to catch up. And the research shows that tutoring programs that provide consistent help, with trained tutors, can make a big difference. For example:

--In Simpson County, Kentucky, 25 AmeriCorps members helped second graders jump 3 reading levels in one year

--At Hands on Atlanta, in the first three years of AmeriCorps involvement, the schools have seen an 11 percent increase in performance on national standardized tests in reading and in math, and 25 percent fewer discipline problems.

--At Reading One-to-One in Texas, with just a semester of tutoring, children improve one full reading level.

The America Reads Challenge legislative proposal specifically would build on groundwork laid by classroom teachers, librarians, and reading specialists by drawing upon the invigorating spirit of community volunteers in tutoring. The proposal encourages family and community involvement in the education of America's children by linking AmeriCorps members, trained and qualified reading

professionals, and volunteer tutors to community and school-based literacy efforts.

America Reads also calls for the expansion of Head Start to reach one million 3- and 4-year-olds; the strengthening and expansion of Title I and Even Start Programs to enhance teaching and learning during the school day, as well as family literacy efforts; and finally, challenging the private sector and community groups to work with schools and libraries.

Right now, each of us can do our part and get involved in the America Reads Challenge:

- 1) Instill a love of reading in your child. Parents are their child's first teachers and learning begins at home. By reading aloud to their children regularly and using TV wisely, parents can empower their children with the lifelong habit of reading and learning.
- 2) Call a local school or literacy program and volunteer as a reading tutor. Many community and civic groups already sponsor tutoring programs and always welcome volunteers.
- 3) Call 1-800-USA-LEARN and ask to get involved in READ*WRITE*NOW, a summer reading component of the America Reads Challenge.
- 4) Call the college or university nearest you, or your alma mater, to see if it has joined the America Reads Challenge. The best office to begin with may be the Financial Aid Offices.

Technology

Question: **Internet Access.** With the emphasis on connecting classrooms to the Internet, how can our public school children be protected from the harmful aspects of the Internet?

Answer: I am committed to ensuring that our children do not get exposed to indecent material and will take all constitutional measures to make sure that they don't. I signed the Communications Decency Act and we are currently defending that law in court. If the Act is

invalidated, I will carefully consider alternative routes to the same goal. I also support industry efforts to develop and market technology, including Internet screening software--a V-chip for the Internet--that will give parents and teachers the ultimate control over what material is available to children.

Question: **E-rate.** E-rate funds for communications and Internet connection schools and libraries are being made on a first-come, first serve basis. Will the funds be available again and how will you ensure equity in distribution of funds?

Answer: Over the next several months, the Federal Communication Commission will work with the Department of Education and the education community to develop an easy application process for schools and libraries to follow. I have asked Secretary Riley and FCC Chairman Reed Hundt to work with local educators, communities and parents on how to help them understand the E-rate and upgrade their schools to take advantage of it. The level of the discount will be higher for the schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods and in rural schools with higher costs of connecting to the Internet.

Question: **Technology.** What can the business community do to help the educational community to stay up to date with the major technological advances that are occurring today?

Answer: The business community has been one of the biggest supporters of our education technology initiative and West Virginia is a national leader in the use of technology in the classrooms. Some 85% of West Virginia's schools will be connected to the Internet by the end of this year and 14,000 educators have been trained to use computers for basic skills instruction. I applaud Bell Atlantic-West Virginia for its commitment to wiring schools, IBM for its support of technology innovation, and Ashland Oil and others for their work on behalf of education reform here in the state.

EDUCATION TOWN HALL MEETING
Thursday, May 22, 1997

Education Q & A's for the President

National Standards/National Tests

Question: **Standards:** Why is the development of national standards so important *now*?

Answer: Student achievement is not improving fast enough. Today's economy demands higher and higher levels of skill and education to succeed in all types of jobs and far too many children are not meeting the standards that will prepare them for tomorrow. High standards pull young people up and encourage them to work harder and create high expectations for themselves. They also provide a benchmark for parents and teachers for what children should know and whether they are learning it. Places that have set high standards have made progress in student achievement. I want that improvement for *all* our children.

Question: **Standards/National vs. Federal.** You say these are "national, not federal" standards and tests. What exactly does that mean, especially since the U.S. Department of Education is going to develop them?

Answer: It means that while the federal government will fund the development of the tests, it is not in charge of what the tests measure, when they are administered, or how they are used in schools and communities around the country.

The tests will be based on the existing National Assessment of Education Progress, which is already used in more than 40 states. The content for these tests -- the reading and math skills they measure -- has already been determined by outside groups of teachers, curriculum specialists and others, and by agreement of state education officials. These content frameworks for reading and math are widely accepted and are based on widespread input, and strong state involvement. They truly are national standards, built from the bottom up. And they are challenging for our youngsters. The new tests I have proposed will measure the same math and reading skills that NAEP already measures.

The federal government will pay for the development of these tests, just as it helps pay for other research and development in

education and other policy areas, and just as it has paid for the National Assessment of Education Progress for almost 30 years. Providing good information and good tools to improve our schools has long been part of the federal government's role in education, and should remain so.

Question: ***Standards/Other National Standards.*** What about other national standards that have been developed in subjects like science and history? Do you support those? Why do you focus so much on reading and math?

Answer: There have been excellent voluntary national standards produced in several subjects, such as math, geography, and civics, that many states and districts are finding useful as they develop their own state and local standards. Other proposed standards, such as the controversial history standards, have not been as successful. At the national level we are focusing on reading and math because they are the first basics, and there is a grassroots, national consensus that every student needs to master these two core subjects.

Question: ***Standards:*** How are you going to ensure that all children can meet these high standards?

Answer: First, these tests, together with state and local tests, will help teachers and parents know which children need help and what help they need.

Second, these tests are about lifting our students up, not putting them down. We must make sure that our students have safe and orderly classrooms, well prepared teachers, access to good textbooks, computers and other technology that will connect them to the information superhighway.

I'm doing my part to help by making sure that the federal government makes a substantial investment in education. And Secretary Riley and the Education Department will continue to provide information on the best practices in each area. But the primary responsibility lies here with those of you in this room -- parents, teachers and principals, school board members, others in the community and state and local officials. You have the responsibility to come together and provide our students with the preparation they need, for these standards and for the

future.

Question: **National Tests/High Stakes.** Do you believe students should be required to pass these tests in order to be promoted to the next grade level?

No state that participates will be required to use the math and reading tests for this purpose. However, I believe that if we set standards for students, they should be required to meet the standards in order to be promoted from elementary to middle school, from middle school to high school, and before graduating from high school. When I was Governor, we required students to pass an 8th grade test before moving into high school. While some students had difficulty passing the test the first time, almost everyone did ultimately. We gave extra help to students who needed it, including summer school. And over time, the percentage of students who passed the test on the first time increased, as students, teachers and parents came to understand how well the did mattered.

I believe every state should require students to meet standards before they move on. Every state gives their own tests, in addition to these national tests. Each state will need to decide what the best combination of tests would be.

Question: **National Test/Students with Disabilities.** What are you doing to support participation of students with disabilities in the 4th and 8th grade assessments you are developing?

Answer: We must expect more of all our children, including those with disabilities. The Department of Education, which is working with education experts to help develop the tests, will make the 4th grade reading and 8th grade math tests available to states and schools in formats accessible to students with disabilities. In addition, schools will be able to get technical assistance and other support to help ensure that students with disabilities are appropriately included.

Question: **National Test/Grade Levels.** Why 4th grade reading and 8th grade math?

Answer: Reading and math are two of the most basic skills. Children can't

move ahead in school in any subject if they can't read English by the 4th grade. And 8th grade math is a pivotal point in terms of making sure that a student has mastered the mathematics she needs to move forward in high school and go to college or into the work place.

Children go to school for the first three years of grade school to learn how to read, so they can spend the rest of their years reading to learn. There is a strong link between low reading skills, falling behind in school, disruptive behavior, and dropping out. Yet, about 40% of our children are not learning how to read well and independently by the end of third grade, decreasing their chances of succeeding in school and in life. We need to change this.

8th grade math is also a critical turning point for students. At that point, students need to have mastered the basics of math -- including the foundations of algebra and geometry -- so they are prepared to go on and take the harder math and science courses they need for college preparation or jobs right out of high school. In our high technology, international economy, our students will need to know more mathematics than most of us adults learned. And, having good math skills is increasingly a prerequisite for getting a good job, students who don't take algebra and geometry are much less likely to go to college than students who do.

Unfortunately, right now, the United States is below the international average in math at 8th grade. We can do better. Many more young people should be taking algebra by the end of the 8th grade so they can take more advanced course in high school. That is what most 13 year olds are doing around the world. Only 25% of our 8th graders have learned algebra -- as opposed to almost 100% of students in other industrialized nations. Having a national benchmark in math at 8th grade will show whether our students are where they should be.

Question: ***National Test/Too Late?*** Isn't 4th grade too late for a reading test?

Answer: No. Children are expected to have made the transition from learning to read to reading to learn by the 4th grade. This is the critical turning point -- and the point we should measure to see that all our students are making it.

Of course, a short national test in reading does not replace what

teachers and parents have always done -- paying attention to children's progress in learning to read all through the critical early childhood years.

Question: ***National Test/Why Needed?*** How will these tests differ from existing tests? What will they tell us that we don't already know?

Answer: These tests will provide information to parents and teachers about individual student scores and how close a child is to reaching high national standards. Currently, there is no way of knowing whether your child's progress or your child's school is measuring up to national and international standards. Now, each state sets its own standards, and some are more difficult than others, so it is difficult for parents to tell how well their child is actually doing compared with tough, meaningful national and international benchmarks--the kind they will be judged against in the real world. These tests will give parents and teachers, wherever they live, an opportunity to know how their children are doing.

Question: ***National Test/Content.*** Who decides what is on the tests?

Answer: The tests will be based on the widely accepted frameworks of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). These frameworks are developed by nationally recognized teachers and other educators and community leaders, with input from thousands of interested parents, teachers and others interested in education.

At present 43 states -- including West Virginia -- participate in the NAEP and have agreed that the NAEP frameworks in reading and math are good standards for what students should know in these critical subjects.

Question: ***National Test/Privacy.*** Will the federal government have my child's test score? Will it be private?

Answer: The federal government will not be collecting individual student scores. It will be up to states and communities to do that, if they choose to and they will have to keep individual student scores confidential.

Question: **National Test/Cost.** How much will it cost to give the tests?

Answer: The total cost of developing the new tests will be between \$10 - 12 million per year in 1997 and 1998. The cost of administering the new tests is estimated to be \$10 - \$12 per student, and I've proposed that the Department of Education reimburse these costs for the first year. This investment is more than worth it to make sure we are doing all we can to help students master the basics.

Question: **National Test/LEP Students.** Will children with limited English proficiency be included in these tests?

Answer: Yes. We want to make sure that students with limited English will be able to take the test whenever possible. This means that we will provide the math test in Spanish. It also means that when the test is administered, schools would provide accommodations that students need such as access to an English dictionary.

Question: **National Test/English and Spanish.** Why is the math test being given in English and Spanish but the reading test is only being given in English?

Answer: Developing the ability to read in English is a basic skill that every child must have to succeed in American schools and society. However, there are many recent immigrants at the 8th grade level who may not speak English well but who can do advanced math and should be asked to show what math they know. We are providing a bilingual math test in Spanish and English because Spanish is the most common language other than English among students.

Question: **National Test/Calculators.** Will you allow kids to use calculators on the new tests? Shouldn't kids know their multiplication tables on their own and not rely on calculators?

Answer: Kids should learn the basics. They should know how to add, subtract, multiply and divide without using a calculator. However, after a child has mastered the basics of arithmetic, calculators can be useful for solving complicated math problems. As part of the test development process, an advisory committee of outstanding

math teachers and other experts will be considering this issue.

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Question: **HOPE/IRS.** Will the IRS be looking at my grades to see if I'm eligible for the HOPE Scholarship?

[NOTE: On Sunday, Frank Raines told CNN that "we think that having the IRS trying to enforce grades may be going a little too far, and we're going to try to find a way to simplify the program."]

Answer: The IRS would not be looking at student transcripts. But I do want to make sure that we are not only helping people pay for college, but also that they have an incentive to work hard once they are there. A new study from Georgia State University suggests that the grade requirement in Georgia's HOPE Scholarship plan has helped some of the borderline students, those who started out very close to the B average, to perform better in college.

I have gotten some feedback about the grade requirement in my

HOPE Scholarship plan, and Secretary Riley and Secretary Rubin will be working closely with Congress to make sure that we encourage students to work hard, but that we do it in a simple way, without imposing any undue burdens on taxpayers or colleges.

Question: **Student Loans.** Does the budget agreement cut student loans?

Answer: No, it will not affect student loan borrowers in any way. There are some savings to taxpayers that we can achieve by making government more efficient and reducing subsidies to middlemen -- something that I proposed in my Budget in January -- and the negotiators agreed to some of those changes to help bring the deficit down by \$1.7 billion. But the agreement makes it clear that there can be no cuts in benefits or availability of loans. (And colleges may continue to choose to participate in the Direct Loan program or the guarantee system).

Question: **Education Investments.** With the tax cuts, will there be any money left for education programs?

Answer: The budget agreement includes ***the largest increase in our investment in education in 30 years, and the largest single boost in college aid since the G.I. Bill***. It includes:

- **Roughly \$35 billion in tax cuts for higher education**, consistent with the HOPE Scholarship and \$10,000 tax deduction.
- **Pell Grant Expansion.** The largest increase in two decades -- a funding boost of 25%. The maximum award will reach \$3,000, an increase of \$300. In the 1998 budget alone, an additional 348,000 students will receive grants: 130,000 young people from moderate-income families, and 218,000 low income students over the age of 24.
- **Technology Literacy.** Double funding to help ensure that computers are in every classroom, every classroom is connected to the Internet, all teachers are trained, and that high quality software and on-line resources are available to help schools integrate technology into the curriculum so that students can become technologically literate.

- **Head Start.** Continued expansion toward my goal of 1 million kids in 2002.
- **America Reads.** A child literacy initiative consistent with the America Reads Challenge, to mobilize volunteers to help every child learn to read well and independently by the end of third grade.
- **Job Corps and other Job Training.** A 12% increase for job training programs, including continued expansion of Job Corps.

Question: **Reading.** What is the reading program that was including in the budget deal?

Answer: The agreement includes my plan to help make sure that every child learns to read well and independently by the end of third grade. Secretary Riley and Harris Wofford, the CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service, will be working with Congress on some of the details. What I have proposed includes:

- **America's Reading Corps:** 25,000 reading specialists and 11,000 AmeriCorps members serving as recruiters and coordinators, to enlist an army of one million volunteer tutors.
- **Parents as First Teachers:** Grants to foster effective programs that help parents help their children to become successful readers (e.g. HIPPIY).
- **Head Start expansion.**

General Topics and Issues

Question: **College Costs.** Why has college tuition been going up?

Answer: Between the 1990-91 academic year and the 1995-96 academic year, overall price inflation was only 17 percent, but the average tuition and fees at public colleges increased by 31 percent and at private colleges increased by 33 percent. Some of the increase is the result of research and staffing costs that increased faster than inflation. At the public colleges, funding from State legislatures did not grow as fast as costs did. And at private colleges, while

tuition went up, so did financial aid that the college was providing (in other words, not everyone was actually paying the full tuition and fees).

Question: **Goals 2000 Controversies.** Aren't these tests just another version of your Goals 2000 program, in which the federal government promotes outcomes-based education, politically-correct history, and a federal takeover of our schools?

Answer: These tests are not a part of Goals 2000, but let me say that I'm very proud of Goals 2000. Goals 2000 provides federal support for state and local efforts to raise academic standards in the basic skills and core academic subjects, and for local, bottom up efforts to improve teaching and learning. There are no federal standards or curriculum, and no requirement for outcomes-based education or any other particular approach.

With regard to a "federal takeover" of local schools, that simply isn't accurate. Goals 2000 supports local control, not federal control. You don't have to take my word for this. Harrison County and some 40 other school systems in West Virginia have received Goals 2000 funds. You should ask teachers, principals, school board members or parents in those communities if Secretary Riley and the U.S. Department of Education have come in and set their curriculum or otherwise tried to tell them what to do.

The national tests we are discussing today are focused on basic reading and math skills that all students should master. They are not part of Goals 2000 in any way, and you don't have to give the tests in order to keep receiving Goals 2000 funds. However, I believe every states should participate in Goals 2000 and in these tests. They are both ways of helping our students reach for the highest possible standards.

Question: **School-to-Work Controversies** The School-to-Work program has been somewhat controversial in West Virginia. Is it true that School-to-Work tracks kids into inferior programs of study with low academic standards and requires them to make job decisions in elementary and middle schools?

Answer: No. The School-to-Work Program is designed to give students the academic and on-the-job training to prepare them for high skill jobs and further education. School-to-Work does not in any way track students into certain career paths, nor limit their options. It

gives students and parents information and opportunities to explore a wide range of career options, and it helps make sure that students learn basic and advanced academic skills that will prepare them either for work or for college.

Question: **IDEA and Discipline.** I am concerned about keeping our schools safe and disciplined. I understand that the new special education law (IDEA) just passed by Congress still makes it difficult to discipline disruptive students who are disabled. How can the other students learn if teachers can't maintain order?

Answer: First, let me point out that the federal special education law, first passed in the 1970's, has been essential for providing education opportunities for children with disabilities. Before that law was passed, many children with disabilities were denied an education. Since the law was passed, educational opportunities for children with disabilities have increased dramatically, because the law guarantees an education to these children. This is a good thing, because the education of every child is important, because education is the way for all of our people to become productive and independent citizens. I am proud to be able to sign, next month, the bill continuing this law in effect.

Second, I agree that it is very important for all children that classrooms be orderly places where children can learn and teachers can teach. While maintaining the responsibility to provide children with disabilities with a free and appropriate education, this new bill strengthens the ability of teachers and principals to deal with disruptive or dangerous students, including those with disabilities. It does this by:

- making it easier for principals to remove from the classroom children with disabilities who bring a gun, weapon or drugs to school, or who pose a danger to themselves, their teachers or their classmates, while continuing to provide them with an education in another setting.
- making it easier to address a child's behavior problems early on -- before they get out of hand -- by requiring that these be considered in the development of an Individual Education Plan, and by making the regular classroom teacher a part of the team that develops the plan.

Finding the right balance between the protection of individual

students and the needs of a larger group is often difficult. I am pleased that the Congress, with an overwhelming bipartisan majority, has found a way to strike that balance.

Question: **Safe Schools:** There are stories all the time about people walking into schools and shooting kids, fights, drugs, etc. What is the government doing to stop it?

Answer: I have challenged all schools to put in place high standards of discipline and behavior along with tough measures to keep guns and drugs out of schools. Last year I protected the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities program that supports school security, and drug and violence prevention programs in 97 percent of our country's school districts. I also support school uniforms as one way to deter school violence, and have encouraged communities to enforce truancy laws.

Question: **Teacher Salaries:** I'd like to become a teacher and I think I'd be a good one. But I can't afford it. Is there anything the government can do to make teacher salaries greater?

Answer: You set the salary for teachers here in West Virginia, just as states and local school districts do across America. In this state you have made substantial progress on teachers' salaries during the 1990s. Through income-contingent student loans, I have worked to make it easier for college graduates to enter teaching or pursue other service-related professions where starting salaries are relatively low.

Question: **Vouchers.** I think voucher programs provide an opportunity to some parents they otherwise would not have -- to send their child to a private or parochial school. What is your position on school vouchers?

Answer: I believe there are better ways to provide greater school choice to students and their families. One very good way is to have every state pass a charter school law that allows parents and teachers to start new public charter schools that stay open only as long they do a good job. In fact, I have proposed nearly doubling the charter school start-up program (to \$100 million next year) to help start 3,000 charter schools over the next several years.

While I support public school choice, I oppose federally funded tuition vouchers for private elementary and secondary schools. I also oppose state funded and locally funded vouchers. Vouchers take money away from public schools, and controversy over vouchers distracts communities from the hard work of improving our schools.

Family and Community Involvement

Question: **Parental Responsibility:** What can you do to make sure parents understand what they need to do to make sure their children are ready to start school, and how they can help their children as they go through?

Answer: Over thirty years of research shows that family involvement in children's learning is critical to their child's success. There are lots of things parents can do to help their children start school ready to learn. I strongly urge parents to read to their children starting in their earliest years. Schools can provide a welcoming atmosphere for parents, while local employers can help by giving paid leave for employees to be involved in their children's schools, or provide other means for employees to attend parent-teacher conferences or volunteer as tutors or mentors. Some of the best employers do it.

Question: **Parental Responsibility:** What about parents who can't read and write, or have other limitations? How can they help their children get ready for and successfully proceed through school?

Answer: Every parent can help, from the first days of a child's life--by talking and singing to them, paying attention to them, and helping them learn their colors and shapes. All parents can help their kids in other ways by showing up at school events, asking kids if they need help and getting it for them, being active in school activities, and giving them a place to do homework and making sure they do it. Through programs like Adult Education and Even Start family literacy we support local initiatives that assist parents to gain the skills they need to help their children and build a better life for themselves and their families.

Question: **Business Community Partnerships:** More and more, we are finding the need for employees with higher levels of training than we are seeing coming into the workplace. How can employers like

me help ensure that more highly qualified candidates will enter the workforce?

Answer: The business community knows as well as any how important high standards are in educating our youth. All over the country, businesses have successfully forged partnerships with their local school communities to provide resources like apprenticeship and mentoring programs, after school programs, etc. Last month, over 200 high-tech industry leaders who hire graduates from across the country endorsed my standards and testing initiative because they know first hand how important it is to have highly skilled graduates entering their workforces. You can help by partnering with your local school community.

Question: **School to Work.** How do I open my business up to the school to work program?

Answer: Business supports school-to-work partnerships because they represent an investment in people which yields access to highly trained, versatile workers who are certified and knowledgeable in all aspects of an industry. I would urge any employer interested in getting more involved to talk with their local school system and community colleges about how to participate.

Question: **Local School Systems.** What can local school systems do to help implement the goals set by the education summits and your national initiatives?

Answer: There are lots of things that local schools can do:

- Use the national tests and set high standards.
- Help prepare teachers to become national board-certified and reward them when they do.
- Develop and enforce fair standards of conduct for all students.
- Get the whole community involved in helping young children learn to read. Pediatricians should prescribe reading to parents of infants and preschoolers. College students and others should volunteer to tutor.

- Keep working, as you are in West Virginia, to make sure every 12 year old can log onto the Internet.
- Start early in letting students and families know that they will need at least 2 years of postsecondary education.

Question: ***After-School Programs:*** Both of my parents work. Will there be any money to have after-school programs at schools like mine?

Answer: My budget includes a new initiative to provide safe havens and to extend learning opportunities for children and their families at schools across the country. The initiative will help after-school, summer and weekend programs get started as Community Learning Centers and foster community involvement.

America Reads

Question: ***Reading.*** How can we become a nation of readers?

Answer: My America Reads Challenge is pursuing several essential strategies to help our children learn to read: creating more learning opportunities to supplement classroom reading instruction; encouraging parent involvement to help children develop readiness skills for reading beginning at birth, as well as involvement throughout the school years; and bringing best teaching practices into classrooms.

Question: ***Reading/Tutoring.*** Does Tutoring make a difference? Aren't teachers most important?

Answer: Even the best teachers will tell you that some children need extra help outside the classroom hours in order to catch up. And the research shows that tutoring programs that provide consistent help, with trained tutors, can make a big difference. For example:

--In Simpson County, Kentucky, 25 AmeriCorps members helped second graders jump 3 reading levels in one year

--At Hands on Atlanta, in the first three years of AmeriCorps

involvement, the schools have seen an 11 percent increase in performance on national standardized tests in reading and in math, and 25 percent fewer discipline problems.

--At Reading One-to-One in Texas, with just a semester of tutoring, children improve one full reading level.

The America Reads Challenge legislative proposal specifically would build on groundwork laid by classroom teachers, librarians, and reading specialists by drawing upon the invigorating spirit of community volunteers in tutoring. The proposal encourages family and community involvement in the education of America's children by linking AmeriCorps members, trained and qualified reading professionals, and volunteer tutors to community and school-based literacy efforts.

America Reads also calls for the expansion of Head Start to reach one million 3- and 4-year-olds; the strengthening and expansion of Title I and Even Start Programs to enhance teaching and learning during the school day, as well as family literacy efforts; and finally, challenging the private sector and community groups to work with schools and libraries.

Right now, each of us can do our part and get involved in the America Reads Challenge:

- 1) Instill a love of reading in your child. Parents are their child's first teachers and learning begins at home. By reading aloud to their children regularly and using TV wisely, parents can empower their children with the lifelong habit of reading and learning.
- 2) Call a local school or literacy program and volunteer as a reading tutor. Many community and civic groups already sponsor tutoring programs and always welcome volunteers.
- 3) Call 1-800-USA-LEARN and ask to get involved in READ*WRITE*NOW, a summer reading component of the America Reads Challenge.
- 4) Call the college or university nearest you, or your alma mater, to see if it has joined the America Reads Challenge. The best office to begin with may be the Financial Aid Offices.

Technology

Question: **Internet Access.** With the emphasis on connecting classrooms to the Internet, how can our public school children be protected from the harmful aspects of the Internet?

Answer: I am committed to ensuring that our children do not get exposed to indecent material and will take all constitutional measures to make sure that they don't. I signed the Communications Decency Act and we are currently defending that law in court. If the Act is invalidated, I will carefully consider alternative routes to the same goal. I also support industry efforts to develop and market technology, including Internet screening software--a V-chip for the Internet--that will give parents and teachers the ultimate control over what material is available to children.

Question: **E-rate.** E-rate funds for communications and Internet connection schools and libraries are being made on a first-come, first serve basis. Will the funds be available again and how will you ensure equity in distribution of funds?

Answer: Over the next several months, the Federal Communication Commission will work with the Department of Education and the education community to develop an easy application process for schools and libraries to follow. I have asked Secretary Riley and FCC Chairman Reed Hundt to work with local educators, communities and parents on how to help them understand the E-rate and upgrade their schools to take advantage of it. The level of the discount will be higher for the schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods and in rural schools with higher costs of connecting to the Internet.

Question: **Technology.** What can the business community do to help the educational community to stay up to date with the major technological advances that are occurring today?

Answer: The business community has been one of the biggest supporters of our education technology initiative and West Virginia is a national leader in the use of technology in the classrooms. Some 85% of West Virginia's schools will be connected to the Internet by the end of this year and 14,000 educators have been trained to use computers for basic skills instruction. I applaud Bell Atlantic-West

Virginia for its commitment to wiring schools, IBM for its support of technology innovation, and Ashland Oil and others for their work on behalf of education reform here in the state.

Q&A on Late-Term Abortion

Question: Will you sign the Partial Birth Abortion Act now that it has passed both the House and Senate with overwhelming majorities?

Answer: No, because I am still not convinced that this bill adequately protects women from grievous harm. I have said over and over that if Congress were to add a narrow exception covering the few cases where this procedure is needed to prevent women in dire circumstances from suffering serious injury, then I would gladly sign the bill. But until Congress does add that narrow exception, I will veto the bill -- no matter how many votes there are in favor it -- to protect the health of women.

Question: Why didn't the AMA's endorsement of the Partial Birth Abortion Act -- and its statement that the partial-birth procedure is not good medicine -- change your view of this legislation?

Answer: I looked at the AMA's letter, and it did not persuade me that this bill fully protects women from grievous injury. Let me remind you that the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, which is the organization of doctors that knows the most about this issue, opposes this bill for the same reason I do -- because it prevents doctors from using a procedure that in a small group of cases best protects women from serious physical injury. The AMA endorsed this bill after bargaining for a change that protects doctors. I've implored Congress to make a narrow change in the bill to protect women -- to ensure that they don't suffer grievous injury because Congress has tied the hands of their doctors -- and I will not sign the bill until I get it.

Question: Didn't you base your prior veto of the bill on false information -- i.e., that this procedure is performed only a few hundred times each year and only when women are in great danger?

Answer: I vetoed the bill because there are a small group of women in desperate circumstances who need this procedure in order to save their lives or prevent serious injury to their health. Let's be clear: I've never said that these are the only circumstances in which the procedure is used; I've just said that these few women need to be protected. If Congress does so, I will gladly sign the bill, because I think this kind of procedure should be banned except when necessary to save the life of a woman or prevent serious harm to her health.

Q: WHY DID YOU OPPOSE THE HATCH-KENNEDY AMENDMENT TO EXPAND HEALTH CARE COVERAGE TO MORE CHILDREN?

A: I do not oppose the tobacco tax to be used as a financing mechanism for more health coverage, nor do I oppose the goals of the Hatch-Kennedy legislation. In fact, I am committed to building on the \$16 billion we have achieved in the balanced budget agreement. I look forward to working with Senator Hatch, Senator Kennedy, and other members in this regard.

My primary concern with the budget amendment offered yesterday is that I feared that it would severely undermine the possibility of a balanced budget agreement, including the \$16 billion investment for children. My commitment to health care coverage is well known, and I will fight this year and beyond to expand health care coverage.

April K. Mellody

05/21/97 07:41:55 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Christa Robinson/OPD/EOP, William R. Kincaid/OPD/EOP

cc:

Subject: one-pager

Here's the one-pager. I didn't really change anything. I just added a few things and reformatted it (header and stuff). Let me know if you need to make any changes. Thanks. AM

**TRIP OF THE PRESIDENT TO CLARKSBURG WEST VIRGINIA
FOR AN EDUCATION TOWN MEETING
May 22, 1997**

President Clinton today will host an Education Town Meeting at Robert C. Byrd High School in Clarksburg, West Virginia to promote his call for national education standards and tests. In his opening remarks, the President will focus on the need for adopting standards and the bipartisan support for the strategy including endorsement by West Virginia Governor Underwood and Massachusetts Governor William Weld. In the forum, the President will highlight the types of skills and information students must master to meet national standards by working through some sample 4th grade reading and math test problems. The President will call on fourth grade student Hannah Galey will read a passage from Charlotte's Web.

The audience is comprised of 160 parents, students, teachers, business and community leaders and others interested in education. The discussion is expected to focus on national standards and how we can prepare young people for the future.

In his State of the Union Address, President Clinton called on every state to adopt high national standards and tests in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math in order to make sure that every student masters these basic skills. The new tests will be based on the widely used National Assessment of Education Progress and will measure individual student performance against widely accepted content standards used by NAEP. The tests will be available for use in the Spring of 1999.

Robert C. Byrd High School and West Virginia

Robert C. Byrd High School has a student body of over 1000 students and is a merger of two high schools in Clarksburg. The citizens of Harrison County passed a bond to finance the school. While adding to their tax burden, the bond also symbolized the commitment of residents to their children's future.

The school is working to make the facility and its curriculum ■ exemplary examples of what is possible in secondary education today. ■ Students now enjoy modern technology, a comprehensive curriculum including music and the performing arts, and magnet programs including English literature, Calculus and Computer Programming.

West Virginia has demonstrated substantial improvement in 4th grade and 8th grade math during the 1990s. Between 1992 and 1996, West Virginia's average 4th grade math score increased by 8 points, together with a 6 point increase for 8th grade math, on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), which tests a sample of students in each participating state. West Virginia tied for the third highest state improvement at both grade levels on NAEP.

West Virginia has also been a leader in the use of technology in schools, in increasing achievements of their students, and today has signed onto the President's national standards and testing proposal. The state's 11-to-1 student-computer ratio in elementary schools is one of the lowest in the nation. To date, 14,000 educators have been trained to use computers for basic skills instruction. Forty percent of West Virginia's schools are now connected to the Internet, and state officials plan to reach 85% in 1997.

Growing Bipartisan Support for National Tests in 4th Grade Reading and 8th Grade Math.

President Clinton's call for national standards and tests in 4th grade reading and 8th grade math received additional bipartisan support today, as Governor Underwood and state education officials in West Virginia, and Governor Weld and state education officials in Massachusetts, announced plans to participate in the testing initiative. These states join [top officials in] Maryland, Michigan, North Carolina, and the Department of Defense schools, which have pledged to participate in this testing initiative in 1999.

Growing Business Support. Yesterday, James Orr, CEO of UNUM Insurance and Chairman of the Board of the National Alliance of Business, announced NAB's endorsement of the President's testing initiative. NAB represents small, medium and large size businesses. Following a survey of its members which revealed strong overall support for the President's testing initiative, NAB announced its full support for President Clinton's testing initiative, and promised to bring this message to other business organizations. NAB now joins the Business Roundtable and more than 240 high-tech CEO's who have already endorsed these tests. The strong support of the business community underscores the fact that in order for individuals to compete in a global economy and a geographically mobile society, our nation must set and our students must be challenging national standards.



NEWS RELEASE

contact: Milt Goldberg
202/289-2944

Business leaders endorse President Clinton's initiative to develop voluntary national tests

Washington, DC (May 21, 1997) - James F. Orr III, chairman and CEO of UNUM Corporation and chairman of the National Alliance of Business (NAB), today announced the endorsement of the Alliance for efforts supporting the initiative to develop voluntary national tests, originally proposed by President Clinton in his 1997 State of the Union address, to measure student reading skills in the 4th grade and mathematics skills in the 8th grade. The Alliance believes these voluntary tests could be used by state and local school districts to measure the progress of American students in these core subjects.

The Alliance recently surveyed its members on this issue and an overwhelming number supported the initiative to develop the voluntary national tests.

The Alliance works cooperatively with over 300 state and local business/education coalitions in partnership with school leaders, parents, and teachers to improve the quality of American education.

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The National Alliance of Business is a nonprofit, business-led organization dedicated to building a quality workforce by improving American education, forging a smooth transition from school to work, expanding life-long learning opportunities for incumbent workers and fostering strategies that simultaneously address worker security and employer flexibility. The Alliance is chaired by James F. Orr III, chairman and CEO of UNUM Corporation.

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

The Honorable Richard Riley
Secretary of Education
United States Department of Education
Washington, D.C. 20202

May 21, 1997

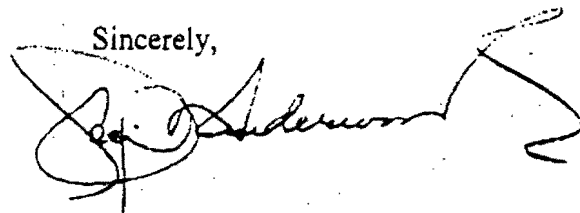
Dear Secretary Riley:

As Governor of the State of West Virginia, and on behalf of Dr. Henry Marockie, State Superintendent of Schools and Ms. Cleo Mathews, President, and the West Virginia Board of Education, I would like to express the State's support for President Clinton's proposed plan to develop a national testing program for all students in grades four and eight. We believe that our citizens deserve the best information possible regarding the effectiveness of the school system's efforts to provide a high quality education for all children and welcome the opportunity to demonstrate that such is the case.

At great personal sacrifice the people of West Virginia have consistently voted to support state and local schools with a greater percentage of their income than do most other states. We believe that those dollars have been well spent as evidenced by the improved performance of state students, on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) and other measures. Unlike NAEP, the proposed program would provide an annual assessment in the critical areas of mathematics and reading by testing all students in grades four in reading and all students in grade eight in mathematics. The information gleaned from this assessment would establish the means to document for the first time what educational progress is being made--state by state and in the nation as a whole-- and provide West Virginia with national benchmarks of achievement.

We look forward to working with you in the coming months to make this proposal a reality. From our experience with a statewide testing program, we have learned just how valuable information gleaned from a systematic assessment program is to an effective and efficient school improvement process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cecil Underwood", with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Cecil Underwood
Governor of West Virginia



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

STATE HOUSE • BOSTON 02133

(617) 727-3600

WILLIAM F. WELD
GOVERNOR

ARGEO PAUL CELLUCCI
LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR

May 21, 1997

Richard W. Riley
Secretary of Education
United States Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.
Room 4181
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Riley:

The Commonwealth is pleased to participate in the new national assessment of student achievement in reading at grade 4 and mathematics at grade 8, scheduled to begin in 1999. We look forward to this federal effort to raise achievement by setting high standards for what students should know in the critical areas of numeracy and literacy.

Our experience in Massachusetts has shown that it is crucial for the state to lead the effort to set rigorous academic standards for all students, and we are in the process of implementing the higher academic standards which are part of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993. This far-reaching legislation has helped increase expectations of student performance among educators and parents, and the measure of our success will be in our new state-wide assessment program for fourth, eighth, and tenth grade students, scheduled to begin in full in the spring of 1998.

In recent years, Massachusetts has been an active partner in many of the federal government's education initiatives. The GOALS 2000 legislation and the School-to-Work program have benefited many of the Commonwealth's schools. Federal support for Massachusetts charter schools is another important instance where federal-state partnership has helped improve public education. This new assessment initiative will provide important information about student achievement, and will further enhance the Commonwealth's efforts to improve our schools. Commissioner of Education Robert Antonucci stands ready to work with you and your staff to implement these measures.

Again, we are pleased to join with the Clinton Administration in supporting this new assessment program to raise the level of student learning, throughout the Commonwealth and across the nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bin Weld".

William F. Weld

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Argeo Paul Cellucci".

Argeo Paul Cellucci